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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
Cathedral-Church of St. Paul,

BEFORE THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD-MAYOR

AND
ALDERMEN.

On *Sunday October* the 9th, 1709.

By *SAMUEL HILLIARD*, M. A.
Prebendary of *Lincoln*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for HENRY CLEMENTS, at
the *Half-Moon* in *St. Paul's Church-*
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Gerrard, Mayor.

*Martis viii die Novembris 1709, Annoq;
RRnæ. Annæ Magnæ Britannia, &c.
Octavo.*

THis Court doth desire Mr. Hilliard to
Print his Sermon lately preached at
the Cathedral-Church of St. Paul, before the
Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City.

Gibson.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
Sir Samuel Gerrard, Bar.
LORD-MAYOR.

My Lord,

THE Commands of your Lordship, and your Worshipful Brethren, is not only the best Excuse that I have for the Publication of this plain Discourse, that was never intended to have appear'd in Publick, but also the best Foundation of hoping, at least, that it may answer your Intentions, in laying this Obligation upon me. 'Tis to me an Argument, that you thought this Sermon would be servicable to excite a due Regard to the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the Sacred Dignity of the Priesthood, which have of late been so boldly struck at by the Author of the Rights of the Christian Church; who has so impudently and (as I humbly conceive) groundlessly boasted of the Approbation of Authority on his Side. May your Lordship's Recommendation of this Discourse to the Publick, which contains Principles

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*ples so directly repugnant to his, be seconded by
the due Use of that Sword which your Lordship
so honourably bears for the Punishment of such
Evil Doers, as turn Religion into Rebellion,
and Faith into Faction.*

I am,

with all due Regard,

Your Lordship's

very humble Servant,

SAMUEL HILLIARD.

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd before the
L O R D - M A Y O R, &c.

L U K E XVI. 29.

*Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and
the Prophets ; let them hear them.*

WHEN God had sufficiently attested the Truth of the Christian Religion, by the Wonders and Miracles that he wrought by the Hands of his Servants ; He thought those amazing Works sufficient to prevail upon Mens Minds, and to gain Credit and Obedience to his Laws for ever after ; so that there could be no Necessity (having such a sure Ground and Foundation for our Faith) to expect that extraordinary Things should be done in every Age of the World to convince Sinners, God governing us now in a Method suited to our Reason, and the Circumstances of our present Condition.

He has therefore given us such Assurances of Eternal Life, as may either *perswade*, or be *resisted* by us ; such a Discovery of the Pains of Hell, as may either work upon our *Fears*, or be defeated by our *Unbelief*. And indeed, without this there would have been no Trial of Men, no Discrimination between the *Wise* and *Foolish*, between the *Virtuous* and the *Wicked* : God will not therefore force a Belief of these Things upon us, but makes it the Subject of our own *Choice*, and an instance of our *Virtue*.

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No Reward is due to them who give Credit to nothing but what they have Occular Demonstration for; such cannot be said to believe God so much as the report of their own Senses; so that the want of the sight of Miracles, is no Justification of any Man's Infidelity: For if all those that were at first done for the Confirmation of our Faith, were to be shewn to every particular Age or Christian, the Wonder of them would cease, and the Miracle would be so far from affecting Mens Minds, that it would have little or no Influence over them. God therefore denies unusual Methods of Conviction to Men's unreasonable Curiosity, and directs them to those ordinary Means of Grace, under which his Mercy and Goodness have so long plac'd them.

The Rich Man spoke of in this Chapter, would have had his Brethren reform'd, by sending one to them from the Dead: ver. 27. Abraham tells him, Moses and the Prophets were sufficient: He again argues, that the Surprize and Wonder of an Apparition would certainly effect the Work: Nay, Father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the Dead, they will repent. To which Abraham very rationally replies, that they who could resist Moses and the Prophets, who had done and said so many wonderful things, and who were sent to them by God himself, wou'd never be convinc'd by any extraordinary Measures that could be taken with them. Even the most affrighting Apparition, the sending One from the Dead, would signifie nothing, if they were so harden'd as not to hear and regard Moses and the Prophets; and therefore since they were bless'd with the ordinary Means of God's Grace, if they were so wicked as not to be prevail'd upon by them, no extraordinary Methods could reasonably be suppos'd to do it. Instead therefore of sending one to them from the Dead, (says Abraham,) Let them make a right use of those Gracious Revelations they already enjoy: They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them. In which Words are express'd,

The fixed and standing Rule God has appointed us to walk by, in order to our Attainment of Salvation, And that is,
By hearing Moses and the Prophets.

If we take Moses and the Prophets properly, they signifie no more than the Five Books of Moses, which contain'd the Old Law, and the Sixteen Books of the Prophets, which were but so many Expositors upon him, either declaring God's Mercies or denouncing his Judgments against the People of Israel, according to their Obedience or Disobedience to that Law, wherein the Messiah was so plainly pre-figured.

Or if we take Moses and the Prophets Figuratively, by a Synecdoche, (where the greater or more eminent part is

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put for the whole;) they signifie then all the Scriptures of the Old Testament, all that the Jewish Church comprized under the Sacred Canon, and look'd upon as a Rule both of Life and Doctrine.

Or if we take *Moses and the Prophets* Analogically, they comprehend then all the several Dispensations of God's Mercy, as express'd either in the Old or New Testament; they signifie the whole revealed Will of God, and whatsoever he has set down therein as necessary to our attaining Eternal Life and Happiness.

Now *Moses and the Prophets*, taken in this large and comprehensive Sense, contain in them all those Things that we ought either to *believe* or to *do*: These sufficiently instruct us, so to *glorifie God* upon Earth, that we may be glorified by him in Heaven. In this Sense therefore I shall take them, as being the fullest and most compleat.

So then, to hear the preaching of God's Word by his Ministers, are the Means appointed by God to bring us to Heaven; these are sufficient to warn us to *flee from the Wrath to come*; these are powerful enough to work either upon our Hopes or Fears, and have sufficient Evidence on *their Side* to make every sober and rational Person to believe and obey them. And therefore God having done all that Men can desire, to justify the Truth of the Scriptures, and having made them so consummate in themselves, for the end for which he caus'd them to be Written, has ordain'd the Hearing of *Them*, to be the ordinary and constant Means of obtaining Salvation: There is no need therefore of any other; for should *one be sent from the Dead*, What can he declare that the Scriptures have not already shewn us? Could He acquaint us, that God will punish the Ungodly, and reward the Righteous? The Scriptures have evidently and clearly done it already. Here we have an Assurance, that God will render to every Man according to his Deeds, to them who by patient Continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: But unto them who obey Unrighteousness, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon the Soul of every Man that doth Evil.

Could one from the Dead shew us that there is an Heaven of Glory, and an Hell of Torment?

Who can describe those blisful Regions better than it is in the 21st and 22^d Chapters of the Revelation of St. John, where we read of a City of pure Gold, with Gates of Pearl, and Walls of precious Stones; Rivers of Chrystal, and Trees of Life; Crowns and Thrones of Glory?

Who can describe Hell and its Torments more frightfully, than it is in the 14th and 15th Chapters of the Revelation; where we are told, That the Wicked shall drink of the Wine of

God's Wrath, which is poured out into the Cup of his Indignation, without mixture; That they shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone; That the Smoak of their Torments shall ascend up for ever and ever; That their Worm shall never die; That they shall never rest Day nor Night; That they shall know their Tongues for Pain, and blaspheme the God of Heaven, because of their Torments and Agonies?

Could any one from the Dead give greater Encouragement to Sinners to repent, than that efficacious Eloquence which we find so abundantly in the Scriptures? Do they not declare, That whensoever the wicked Man turneth away from the Wickedness that he hath committed, and does that which is Lawful and Right, he shall save his Soul alive? Nay, does not the Ever-Blessed Jesus himself tell us, in the 15th Chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, *There is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth?*

What need therefore of sending one from the Dead, since these Things are so demonstrably made known to us by the Holy Scriptures; and those Scriptures have been confirmed by the Evidence of them that have risen from the Dead, as well as by the most undeniable Miracles, Signs and Wonders? From whence we may see, that God hath order'd the *Hearing Moses and the Prophets*, as sufficient Means in themselves of our attaining Salvation.

And that he has done so, will be further evident from these following Considerations. As,

1st. Because he himself directs us to *Moses and the Prophets* only, in order to it.

2dly. Because he has made those Means so perfect and compleat for the effecting of that End, that nothing can be more so, And

Lastly, Because the Effects produc'd by them have sufficiently demonstrated their Power and Efficacy to that purpose.

1st. It is evident, That God has appointed the *Hearing of Moses and the Prophets*, as the Means of attaining Salvation, because he directs us to *Them*, as the only proper Method that can be taken in order to it. 'Twas to this that God of old directed the *Jews*, when they had forsaken him, and betaken themselves to other ways, to the *Law*, and to the *Testimonie*, *Isaiah 8. 20. If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* So our Blessed Lord sends us to the *Church* for Direction. But if (says he) they hear not the *Church*, let him be to thee as an *Heathen Man* and a *Publican*, *Matth. 18. 17.* Nay, tho' the *Jewish Doctors* in our Saviour's Days, were Men of the most corrupt and vicious Lives; yet that could not excuse the People from attending upon their Ministry. *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Mo-*
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as Chair; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe that (says he,) observe and do, Matth. 23. 2, 3. So that it is a very dangerous Mistake in many among us, to think that the reading the Scriptures or a good Sermon at Home is sufficient, whilst they neglect the Publick Ministry of God's Word in the Church. The Rich Man's Brethren were not here, directed to Read, but to Hear Moses and the Prophets; and v. 31. we are told, that if they refus'd to hear them, if they neglected the Publick Ministry, there could be no hopes of their being perswaded, though one rose from the Dead. Moses and the Prophets, Our Saviour Christ and his Apostles, and the Elders or Ministers who have been Ordain'd in every City by them, and their Successors ever since, and who rightly and duly Administer Gods Holy Word and Sacraments; are authoriz'd and appointed by God for the Work of the Ministry, to set forward the Salvation of all. And if Men are so perverse, as to pay no due Regard to their Instructions, which come recommended with no less a Commission and Authority than that of God himself; or if they neglect to discharge this necessary Duty with that Reverence and Attention which it demands and requires, the Condition of such profane and irreligious Persons, is so desperate and and deplorable, as leaves no hopes of Mercy, but from the Prayers of the Communion of that Church they so insolently and carelessly despise.

The great modern Pretenders to Wit and Reason, who are for advancing both above the Word and Ordinances of God, are for making the "*Clark's Title to the Priesthood as good as the Parson's*, and fixing a Right in every One, to exercise
 "the Office of Preaching, Baptizing, Praying aloud, Rights of
 "and Consecrating the Elements, which they impiously the Chri-
 "call Conjurat[i]on, instead of Consecration, and can stian
 vouchsafe no better Names for the Clergy, than Church.
 that of Note-Makers, and Pulpit-Blunderbusses.

Though, I say, they thus impiously revile the Ministers of God's Holy Word and Sacraments, vilifie their Sacred Office, and the last solemn Institution of the Holy Jesus celebrated by them, yet the Apostle expressly declares, Heb. 5. 4. No Man taketh, or can take this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Every lawfully ordain'd Minister by the laying on of Hands of the Bishops and Pastors of Christs Church, has his Commission and Authority from Christ Jesus, the Supreme Head and Governour of the Church.

The Church is his Family; and all the Officers of it are appointed and ordain'd by the great Master of the Household: He that is its Redeemer, Prince, and Saviour, has constituted and empower'd Guides and Instructors to the End of the World. He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and Evangelists, and

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Some Pastors, and Teachers, for the refreshing of the Saints & for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Eph. 4. 11, 12.

St. James, in a very particular manner, directs Christians when they are Sick, to send for the Elders or Ministers of the Church to pray over them: And St. Peter exhorts the Ministers of God, to feed the Flock of God, and particularly enjoins it upon the People, that they be obedient to them. Timothy has Rules laid down for his Direction in Ordaining Bishops and Deacons; and Ministers are spoke of under very great Characters of Distinction from other private Christians, whom they are said to rule; and they are therefore stil'd in Holy Writ, *Ministers of the Gospel, Embassadors of God, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*. And in the Exercise of their Office, they are said to act in God's Name, and in Christ's Stead; so that they are God's proper Officers and Administrators, to negotiate the Business of his Kingdom, and set forward the Salvation of Men.

Hence they are said, to watch for their Peoples Souls, as they that must give account; and they again in a grateful Return for their Labour in the Lord, are commanded in Scripture, to count them worthy of double Honour, and to esteem them highly in Love for their Works sake; nay, to support them with their Substance, that they may attend wholly upon their Sacred Function; and for the sake of the Spiritual Things they dispend to them, to Administer freely to them of their Earthly Things: For he that is taught in the Word, is to administer to him that teacheth in all good Things, and that so freely and liberally, that they who preach the Gospel, may live of the Gospel. The Scriptures being so full and express in asserting and maintaining the Ministerial Office and Authority, God having fix'd and appointed a Succession of Ecclesiastical Officers to the End of the World, and so solemnly enjoyn'd the People to take heed how they hear them; that they attend upon their publick Instructions with due Reverence, with that Soberness and Seriousness as becomes them. It is evident they must be profligately given up to all Vice and Ignorance, and void of all Shame or Fear, or the least sense of this grand and important Duty, who dare thus in despite of God's Commands, and the Eternal Concerns of their Souls, forsake the assembling themselves together in the Church of God, as the manner of some is.

And that they must be arriv'd to the highest Pitch of these flagrant Crimes, who are not content to allow themselves in this Heathenish Practice, but also impiously teach Men to do so too, making their Profelytes ten times more the Children of the Devil than themselves, whose Damnation slumbers not.

Let all those self-conceited Wretches, who are Priests, and a Church to themselves, read and consider what the Ever-blessed Jesus says to the *Ministers of his Holy Word and Sacraments*, to all those that are rightly and duly Ordained to Preach his Holy Gospel: *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and him that sent me*, Luk. 10. 16.

Your Reading and Praying at Home therefore, when done in Contempt of the Publick Ministry, and the True and Genuine Worship, is but a Provocation to God, who interprets it as a *despising* the Solemn Institution of his Ever-Blessed Son, who has sent out his *Ministers as Embassadors in his stead*: Nay, he looks upon it as a *despising himself*, whose Representatives they are. Add to this, That every private Christian is by the very Denomination a professed Member of Christ's Church, and consequently bound to join in perpetual Communion with it. It was our Lord's great Design in his Undertaking for us, to gather to himself a Church out of Mankind; and in this Method, through Obedience to his Laws, to bring them unto Salvation. And this is the plain Sense and Language of God's Spirit throughout the Holy Scriptures; wherein whatsoever our Blessed Lord is said to have done or suffer'd for Mankind, he is said to have done and suffer'd for *them*; not as scatter'd Individuals, or as particular Christians, but as gather'd and incorporated into a *Church*: Thus says the great Apostle St. Paul, *Christ lov'd the Church, and gave himself for it*, Eph. 5. 25. And *he purchas'd the Church with his own Blood*, Acts 20. 28. And so again, *Christ is the Saviour of the Body, that is, the Church*, Eph. 5. 23. Now the Consequence from this, is, that every Christian is, and ought to be, a Member of the publick Church where he lives, (provided that the Terms of its Communion are not sinful;) that without this, we can have no Relation to our Saviour Christ, nor any of the Priviledges of his Gospel: For if we are not of the *Body*, we can have no Relation to the *Head*; and if we be not of the *Church*, we can have no Benefit or Advantage by the Gospel, whose Benefits are dispens'd in the *Church*. Here it is that we have Pardon and Absolution granted us: Here it is that we have God's Grace and especial Presence promis'd to be *in the midst of us*: Mat. 18. 20. Here it is that we have the Preaching of *the good Word of God*, which is *able to make us wise unto Salvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. Here it is that we have the *Ministry of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor. 5. 18. Here are the *Sacraments* to let us in, and to confirm us in the Faith of Christ. Here are the *Keys*, both for binding and loosing our Consciences in point of Sin: *John* 20. 22, 23. So that to the partaking of all those things that are necessary to every Christian's Salvation, there lies an Obligation upon them of *hearing Moses and the Prophets*, of attending constantly upon the publick Ministry, and joining

joining in Communion with the *Church of Christ*; which it is impossible for us to do, unless we Communicate with some particular part of it: And there is no communicating with any part, except we do it with that where we live; I mean, the strict maintaining Parochial Communion; for this is our indispensable Duty. Thus you see the Obligation we lye under to frequent the Parish-Church where we inhabit, if it can be conveniently done: to be constant Attenders upon the Publick Worship; there to join fervently and heartily in the solemn Prayers and Praises; attentively to hear the Preaching of God's Word, and celebrate the Blessed Sacrament which God has appointed to be Administered to us by the *Stewards of the Mysteries of Christ Jesus*: Otherwise all the Labour and Industry we can take, without these prescrib'd Rules, will be in vain. The Apostle was sensible of the horrible Consequence of Mens neglecting the assembling themselves together, when he so solemnly admonish'd the Christians of the Age he liv'd in to be contrary; that they would be very careful not to forsake the Publick Assemblies, as the manner of some among them was, Heb. 10. 25. But

2^{ly}. God has ordered and appointed the hearing *Moses and the Prophets*, the attending upon the Publick Ministry, as the Means of attaining Salvation; because he has made those Means so proper and complete for the effecting of that End, that nothing can be more so.

Faith (St. Paul tells us) comes by Hearing; and that by Grace we are saved thro' Faith, Rom. 10. 17. Eph. 2. 17, 8. Here we see are the Means, and here is the End propos'd. The Scripture, which is the Subject of our Preaching, and your Hearing, is very complete for the attaining the End for which God design'd it, and that it is both in respect of its Sufficiency and Power.

As to its Sufficiency, it is profitable (says the Apostle,) for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good Work, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. And so it is likewise in respect of its Power and Efficacy; for the Word of God (says the Author to the Hebrews) is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, Heb. 4. 12. So that the Scriptures are a sufficient Rule both of Faith and Manners; and if we keep up to our Duty, are constant in hearing *Moses and the Prophets*, diligently attending upon the Publick Ministry of this good Word of God; we shall fully be acquainted with the Nature of our Duty; and the Performance of that, is the Condition of our Salvation.

Not that the bare hearing *Moses and the Prophets*, that the being present at a Sermon, is all that is requir'd of us: If we sit down under that Mistake, tho' we are never so swift to hear, yet

yet we cannot be Servants of God, unless we *so hearken as to Obey*. The Gospel is undoubtedly what the Apostle affirms of it, *the Power of God unto Salvation*; for therein we have all those Laws describ'd, by which God prepares and guides us to eternal Glory. But what are all these Blessed Institutions, if they are not rightly and duly applied. Here are indeed our infallible Directions; but they signifie nothing, if not made use of as God has injoyn'd.

The Devil himself has Scripture enough at command; nay, he *Believes and Trembles*. Judas heard many an excellent Sermon from our Blessed Saviour; yet for all this, was *in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Son of Perdition*.

The Rich Man in Hell, had *heard Moses and the Prophets every Sabbath-Day in the Synagogue*; yet because he was not influenc'd by their Ministry to forsake his Pride, Cruelty and Intemperance, he was doom'd to a place of Torments. *They are not the Hearers, but Doers of the Law, who shall be justified, Rom. 2. 13.*

The Publick Ministration of God's Word and Sacraments is able to *save our Souls*, if it be receiv'd with Meekness, and practic'd with Sincerity; and if it has any other effect, the Fault proceeds not from a Deficiency of Power in that, but a want of Application of it in our selves.

The Defect was not in *the Seed*, but in the *Ground*, into which Our Blessed Lord tells us it was cast. The Gospel therefore is not to be blam'd, *because it is hid to them that are lost*: nor is *Moses and the Prophets* to be objected against, if after the Promulgation of God's Laws, *Men will not continue in them to do them*; nor are the Ministers of God to be reflected upon, if after all their Pains and Labour, Men will either not heed, or else ridicule their Sacred Performances. God has in abundant Goodness render'd his Dispensations sufficient to lead us to eternal Bliss: So that when-ever this good Intention is frustrated, we our selves disappoint their Efficacy and Power.

The Law of the Lord is perfect, (says the Royal Psalmist) converting the Soul: the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making Wise the Simple, Psal. 19. 7. There is nothing wanting in it that can make it useful and profitable to us; for by this we are taught, *what is the Will of God for our Salvation*: By this we are rightly inform'd what to pursue, and what to avoid; what we are to believe and practice: By this we are acquainted with all God's wonderful Condescensions to poor Sinners, in his so earnestly inviting and importuning them to repent: By this we know with what Favour he embraces, with what Tendernefs he corrects, with what Bowels he pities, with what Power he supports, with what Wisdom he directs, *all those that are his People, and the Sheep of his Pasture*: This is the Labour of *Moses and the Prophets*;

Prophets; this the Work of all your Spiritual Pastors and Teachers, that all may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and be saved.

Lastly, It is evident that God has appointed the *Heavening Moses and the Prophets*, the Attending upon the Publick Ministry, as the Means of attaining Salvation; because the Effects produc'd by them, have sufficiently demonstrated their Power and Efficacy to that purpose. When the old World had so corrupted it self, that God repented he had made Man; yet as the likeliest way to reclaim them, he sent Noah (as St. Peter tells us) to be a Preacher of Righteousness. And so when the Jews grew at any time very vicious and corrupt in their Lives, God immediately rais'd up among them some great and notable Prophet, to call them to Repentance, to denounce his Judgments, and to tell them of the Evil of their Doings: And this produc'd sometimes great Changes and Reformation among them. How did the Parable of Nathan affect the Heart of David, awaken his Conscience, and put him upon a serious and solemn bewailing his Sins? What a force had Elijah's powerful Sermon even upon a wicked Ahab? It excited him *him to fast, and to humble himself in Sackcloth and Ashes*. What a mighty Reformation in the Days of Josiah, did Hilkiah the High-Priest's acquainting him with the Law of the Lord occasion? But yet all this was nothing to those wonderful Effects produc'd by the preaching of our Lord's Apostles. St. Peter converted no less than Three Thousand Souls at a single Sermon, and Five Thousand at another. The great Apostle of the Gentiles proselyted whole Countries, by his Ministry, to the Christian Religion, Rom. 15. 19. *planting his Gospel from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum*; that is, through all the Countries of Phenice, Syria, and Arabia: So that their Preaching universally prevail'd every where, at a time when all the Wit and Sense, the Power and Interest of the World were Confederate against it. Was it not prodigious that a few illiterate Fishermen, and Tent-makers, should confound the Scribes and Pharisees, and baffle the Rabbies and Philosophers, and triumph over all the Learning and Policy of the Heathen World? That a few poor contemptible Persons, that had neither the Arms of Alexander, nor the Arts of his Master Aristotle, should silence the Oracles, preach down all the Temples and Altars, the Rites and Ceremonies both of the Jewish and Ethnic Constitutions? That they should perswade Men to leave their Riches and Ease, and to embrace Poverty and Trouble, and an afflicted State of Life; to forego Liberty, Pleasures, and Profit; nay, and Life itself, *only to take up the Cross and follow a Crucified Saviour, in Expectation of a Recompence in Heaven*. I say, all this, and abundantly more than this, has been done by *Moses and the Prophets*, by the preaching of our Lord, by the Ministry of his Apostles, and their Successors, ordained

dained by them in the several Ages of the Christian Church.

These are the Means appointed by God for our Salvation, and they are (as you have seen) very sufficient and effectual for that End, (if Men are not wilfully wanting to themselves;) for these are indeed so powerful, that if Men are not to be prevailed upon by them, nothing else can be supposed to reclaim them; if they hear not *Moses and the Prophets*, neither would they be persuaded tho' one rose from the Dead. If those Arguments which have wrought upon so many already, have not the same Effect upon them; it's plain, 'tis nothing but the most perverse Willfulness, and incorrigible Obstinacy, and not want of Evidence: And in this Case it is impossible to convince those who are resolv'd not to be convinced: The strongest Arguments cannot prevail over Mens belov'd *Lusts*, when they are resolv'd in fulfilling them: Demonstration itself cannot confute a resolv'd Will; so that it is impossible for those ever to be reclaim'd by any other Means, who are not to be influenc'd by *Moses and the Prophets*, and the present Dispensers of God's Holy Word and Sacraments: The Arguments they use, being of eternal Consequence to us, are the greatest and strongest that can be propos'd to Humane Understanding; and if these have no Success, nothing else will: For if Men are so desperately besotted; as not to regard the Word of God, which has been so undeniably confirm'd by Miracles from Heaven, and is Orthodoxly preach'd by Persons rightly ordain'd for the Work of the Ministry, they would not be persuaded tho' one rose from the Dead: They who are so profligate as not to regard these, would never be persuaded by any extraordinary Methods that cou'd be taken with them.

From what has been said, it concerns us who are blessed with *Moses and the Prophets*, nay, who have Christ and his Apostles, an Orthodox and rightly Ordain'd Clergy, Preaching almost daily in our Synagogues, and rightly and duly Administring God's Holy Word and Sacraments, to use our best Endeavours that these blessed Benefits which God is pleas'd to vouchsafe us, be not lost upon us, but that we answer the End and Design of God's Goodness in granting them to us. God knows, we have too much Reason to lament the sad Examples that we every Day see of those who despise the Church of God, ridicule its Ministers, and load them with the most odious Names and Characters, vilifie their Office, as nothing but Worldly Policy and Priestcraft, to keep silly People in awe: Such Miscreants as these can never be reclaim'd by that Gospel they so Atheistically traduce. *Moses and the Prophets*, the preaching of God's Word by his Messengers, which has prevailed over all the other Parts of the World, cannot prevail over such as these, who are abandon'd to their own

Lusts

16 A SERMON Preach'd, &c.

Lusts and vile Imaginations. But alas ! This is to turn all those Blessings which God intends for their Salvation, into Instruments of their Damnation ; but since we have not so *learned Christ*, and since God of his Goodness affords us such excellent Instruments of Happiness, let us thankfully embrace, and make a right use of them ; be desirous of Instruction, and willing to pursue all proper Methods in order to it : To this end let us be Humble, and not vainly Conceited of our selves, as if we had no need of Information, nor esteem our selves too great to receive it, even from the meanest Preacher. For (as a great Prelate of our own Church observes,) there is no Discourse so despicable, but that an humble Mind may profit by it, and find somewhat at least to exercise his Charity and Patience, if not excite his Zeal, and improve his Knowledge. Nothing is so great an Enemy to our Proficiency in any Thing, as Pride ; when Men look upon themselves too wise to learn, they neglect and despise Instruction ; wherefore Solomon says of such an one, *Seest thou a Man wise in his own Conceit, there is more hope of a Fool than of him*, Prov. 26. 12. We should therefore be ready to distrust our selves, and our own Apprehensions, bear a due Regard and Deference to the Judgment of others, and be willing to be *taught* by those whom God has set over us for that End and Purpose.

Thus having *Moses* and the Prophets, our Saviour Christ, and his Apostles and Ministers, rightly succeeding them by a Legal Ordination, you should *hear Them*, strive all you can to receive Benefit by their Ministry : And that our preaching may not be in vain to you, come to the Publick Assemblies, as Christians ought to do, with an honest and upright Heart, with Charity and Humility, being sincerely desirous of improving your Knowledge and Understanding your Duty. But above all, come with firm Resolutions of practising what you hear ; remember 'tis this that Christianity intends and designs in all its Ordinances : And if we thus sincerely direct all our Hearing to the Glory of God, and the Edification of our own Souls, we shall in the end obtain an eternal and ever-blessed Reward for all our Services ; *for our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for ever more. Amen, and Amen.

F I N I S.



